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ENST 494.01: Practicum in Sustainable Agriculture Education

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ENST 494.01
Practicum in Sustainable Agriculture Education
2 credits
Fall 2021

Meeting locations: The UM EVST/Garden City Harvest PEAS Farm, Fridays
10:00-11:20AM

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Course Description

This practicum is an opportunity to gain practical experience teaching about sustainable agriculture at the Garden City Harvest/UM EVST PEAS Farm. Under the direction of the GCH Farm to School Program Director, **Farm Educators** (you!!!) will guide visiting school groups on tours of the PEAS Farm and lead educational activities focused on the social, scientific, and nutritional components of sustainable agriculture and the food system. Farm Educators may also have the chance to choose and lead lessons tailored to the curriculum needs and skill levels of visiting school groups. Farm educators will also learn about educational techniques through articles and other reading selections, and have the opportunity to develop a lesson plan that will be used at the PEAS Farm for future field trips and summer farm camps. The Farm to School Director will base assessments on personal effort and growth demonstrated through teaching, lesson plan development, group discussions, and individual reflection.

Course Requirements

*****You have a unique opportunity to teach, learn from, and influence the lives of many of Missoula's youth. This course was created for your benefit as well as the benefit of Missoula's schoolchildren and the PEAS Farm, please use this time wisely.*****

Attend group discussions. Practicum students will meet twice weekly for the first four weeks of the semester, and then once weekly for the remainder of the semester. Meeting will take place on Fridays either on campus or at the PEAS farm for approximately 1.5 hours to practice teaching methods, discuss program materials, selected readings, and experiences as educators. **You are expected to be present and participate in ALL group discussions.** We can have a really great time learning from each other and our place if we want to! Contact Jason in advance if you expect to miss a discussion. *****EACH FRIDAY DISCUSSION CLASS YOU DO NOT ATTEND WITHOUT PRIOR ARRANGEMENT WITH THE INSTRUCTOR WILL LOWER YOUR FINAL GRADE ½ A LETTER GRADE . *****

Learn how to give an Educational Farm Tour: At the start of the semester, *Farm Educators* will learn the specifics of guiding a group through the PEAS Farm from the *Farm Educator Duties Manual*.

Lead field trip tours and activities: Farm Educators will spend a minimum of three hours (two field trips) on the farm per week working with visiting groups. Depending on availability, they

may lead groups on their own or with one or two other *Farm Educators*. A schedule will be set at the beginning of the semester based on your availability. The schedule will be e-mailed to you every Friday (at the latest) for the upcoming week. All materials needed for Farm Lessons will be provided by the instructor.

Required readings: Required readings are included in the Syllabus and may be supplemented or changed by the instructor during the course. Please come to that week's discussion prepared to reflect on and discuss that week's reading and its significance to sustainable agriculture education.

Personal Reflection Journal (Due Friday 12/10): An important component of this course is taking time to reflect on what you are learning about teaching and working with elementary-aged children in an experiential education environment. To do so, I ask you to keep a journal throughout the semester. Your syllabus has suggested journal questions to help you get started, but if you want to go a different route with your journal entries, by all means, do so, this journal is for your benefit. I only ask that you please take time to reflect after each group you work with and keep up with your journal entries (nothing is worse than a journal of two months of experiences that was written the night before!). This journal will help you throughout the semester with your teaching and prepare you to write a final reflection paper at the end of the semester. I will collect these, but I will return them to you!

Create your own lesson plan (Due Friday 12/10) One of the best ways to engage in experiential education is to create and develop your own lesson plan. These lesson plans, if done well, will be something we can use to teach students that visit the PEAS Farm in the future (it is a great way to secure your legacy at the PEAS Farm!), so please put some time and effort into them, they are a great way to help make change in our world. Don't be afraid to push the boundaries with your lesson plans!

Alone, or in pairs, practicum students will create agriculture related lessons that include:

- 1) "Objectives" describing what students will learn
- 2) Grade levels/ages that are appropriate
- 3) A list of materials needed
- 4) How long the lesson should take
- 5) Clear instructions so that anyone could teach the lesson.
- 6) Please indicate if your lesson is compatible with any of the MCPS Science Standards or Benchmarks (please try and make them compatible as they are our number one partner!).

I encourage lessons to be specific to the PEAS Farm since that is where we are, but you may go with a more general approach and develop a lesson that is adaptable for any farm setting. We will spend the last few weeks of group meetings "teaching" our lessons to other Farm Educators and getting feedback from them as well as myself. You will have time after presenting your lesson to the class to revise it before turning it in.

Refer to the "Inquiry-Based Learning" Website for help creating a "facilitation" type lesson.

http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/inquiry/implement_sub2.html

Also, please check out the FoodCorps lessons at this site for some more inspiration:

<https://foodcorps.org/resources/foodcorps-lessons/>

Final reflection paper guidelines (Due Friday 12/10)

In 2-3, single-spaced pages, reflect on your experience as a PEAS Farm Educator. Be honest and creative as you respond to the questions below. Remember this is for you, but can also be very helpful in improving our programs. And again, if these questions don't address the direction you want to go with your paper, scrap 'em! Just remember, personal reflection about your teaching experiences will almost certainly make you a better teacher! Use your journal as a resource for this paper.

- 1) Based on your experiences this semester, what is the most important lesson you learn about being an educator?
- 2) What was your greatest strength as a Farm Educator?
- 3) How could you improve your teaching and leadership?
- 4) How will this experience help you move forward with your personal and/or professional goals?
- 5) How could the Farm to School Program be improved for visiting school groups?

Additional assignment for Graduate students (Due Friday 12/10)

Research one method or theory of experiential education (i.e. place-based education, Montessori schools, Waldorf education, etc.) and write a 4-6 page "literature review" about your chosen method/theory. Describe how it ties or could tie into teaching at the PEAS Farm. Include an annotated bibliography with at least five references.

Grading

Undergraduate:

Attendance & Effort-----75%
Lesson Plan-----15%
Journal and Reflection Paper---10%

Graduate:

Attendance & Effort-----75%
Lesson Plan-----10%
Lit Review-----10%
Journal and Reflection Paper---5%

Course Schedule

9/3 Friday 10:00-11:20, Meet at the PEAS Farm: Go over syllabus. Discuss practicum expectations, gather students schedules, schedule other meetings, contact info, etc.

BEFORE NEXT CLASS:

Read: Get to know your PEAS Farm Educator Manual (READ IT AT LEAST TWICE!!!) and before next Friday, make your way up to the PEAS Farm and take a slow walk around the PEAS Farm getting to know the place in the Fall of 2021 (even if you have interned at the PEAS Farm before)

9/10 Friday 10:00-11:20, Meet at the PEAS Farm: Brief discussion of the PEAS Farm Educator Manual and how to give a tour of the farm. Continue a more in depth tour of the PEAS Farm and how to give an educational farm tour and discussion of the current “educational paradigm”

BEFORE NEXT CLASS:

Read: “*Nature: A part of, not apart from*”

Journal: *What are your personal goals and objectives for this Practicum? What skills would you like to gain or improve upon?*

9/17 Friday 10:00-11:20, Meet at the PEAS Farm: Continue training for Educational Field Trips

BEFORE NEXT CLASS:

Read: Pages 1-8 of David Sobel’s book, Place-Based Education, and please browse these websites to get a better idea of how Farm to School works and some of the USDA programming that connects to this work: <http://www.farmentoschool.org/about/what-is-farm-to-school>, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/programs>, <https://www.montana.edu/mtfarmentoschool/>

Journal: *What must it be like for an elementary school-aged child to visit the PEAS Farm? Why is teaching kids about sustainable agriculture important to you? What are some of the major topics we should talk with them about? What spaces at the farm offer the most “teachable moments”?*

9/24 Friday 10:00-11:20, Meet at the PEAS Farm: Discuss the Farm to School systems across the United States

BEFORE NEXT CLASS:

Read: Concept to Classroom, Inquiry Based Learning Workshop.

Online at: <http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/inquiry/index.html>

Sections to read:

- Explanation: First 4 Sections listed on website
- Demonstration: First 2 Sections listed
- Implementation: All 3 Sections

Journal: *How can we facilitate a love of one’s place by what we do at the Farm? What “lessons” do you think every student should take home from their PEAS Farm visit? What do you think of the MCPS Science Curriculum Objectives?*

10/1 Friday 10:00-11:20, Meet at the PEAS Farm: Discuss Place-Based Ed as it relates to Sustainable Ag Ed as well as how tours have gone so far. Find partners for Lesson Plan projects.

BEFORE NEXT CLASS:

Read:

<https://www.ecoliteracy.org/article/importance-nutrition-education-and-why-it-key-educational-success>

<http://www.epi.umn.edu/let/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/school-nutr-brief.pdf>

Journal: *How does “Inquiry based learning” relate to teaching about sustainable agriculture? How can I use this teaching method?*

10/8 Friday 10:00-11:20, Meet at the PEAS Farm: Discuss Lesson plan assignment. Brainstorm possible lesson plan projects, explore the farm to discuss potential lesson plans.

BEFORE NEXT CLASS:

Journal: *Journal about a success you have had as a Farm Educator.*

- 10/15 Friday 10:00-11:20, Meet at the PEAS Farm: Lesson plan ideas due.** Discuss how we, as somewhat experienced Farm Educators, can make an impact on what kids eat, and how they look at food and our food system.

BEFORE NEXT CLASS:

Journal: *Journal about a challenging moment you have had as a Farm Educator.*

- 10/22 Friday 10:00-11:20, Meet at the PEAS Farm, or on campus (location TBD) weather depending, to discuss Farm to School structure/goals both locally and nationwide.**

BEFORE NEXT CLASS:

Journal: *What had the greatest impact on your teaching during Educational Farm Field Trips?*

- 10/29 Friday 10:00-11:20, Meet on Campus, location TBD, Lesson Plan Presentations.**

BEFORE NEXT CLASS:

Journal: *Are lesson plans effective for experiential, inquiry-based outdoor education?*

- 11/5 Friday 10:00-11:20, Meet on Campus, location TBD: Lesson Plan Presentations.**

BEFORE NEXT CLASS:

Journal: *What will you miss about teaching at the PEAS Farm? What won't you miss? Why do you think you feel this way?*

Special Professorial Note

If you all have any questions or concerns throughout the semester, or right from the start, PLEEEEEEEASE let me know ASAP, I want you all to have a wonderful learning and teaching experience and that starts with high levels of quality communication! Don't be afraid to speak up and ask questions or raise concerns!